

INSTRUCTIONAL MEMORANDUM

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION HIGHWAY DIVISION OFFICE OF MAINTENANCE

CHAPTER: ROADSIDE MAINTENANCE	NO: 5.140
TITLE: ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY PROGRAM	
APPROVED: Lee Wilkinson	ORIGINATION DATE: May 1, 1991
	REVISION DATE: July 1, 2003

I. Purpose:

To provide guidance to field personnel in the handling of Adopt-A-Highway applications and procedures.

II. Definitions:

- A. Adopt-A-Highway - a program designed to create public awareness of environmental needs along Iowa highways by making adopted sections of roadsides available for opportunities to improve the aesthetics of our state.
- B. Eligible sponsors - communities, organizations and individuals.
- C. Ineligible sponsors - those organizations or individuals whose sponsorship might be deemed as a partisan endorsement by the state or have an adverse effect on the program.
- D. Eligible activities include, but are not limited to:
 - 1. litter pick up
 - 2. wildflower and prairie grass plantings
 - 3. planting and harvesting seed for wildlife and reseeding operations
 - 4. tree planting
 - 5. landscaping and landscape maintenance
 - 6. living snow fence plantings
 - 7. hand weeding of sensitive areas

III. References:

- A. Iowa Administrative Rule, Transportation (761), Ch 121
- B. Iowa DOT Standards for Maintenance Activities (Function 648)
- C. Adopt-A-Highway Safety Brochure

IV. General Guidelines:

- A. The Adopt-A-Highway program allows individuals or groups to assume responsibility for performing one or more of the eligible activities for a specific segment of highway. These activities have the potential to reduce litter along highways, enhance the environment, beautify roadsides, and

build broad-based community support for anti-litter and highway beautification programs.

B. Eligible Highway Segments for Adoption.

1. All roads under the jurisdiction of the Department shall be eligible for inclusion in the Adopt-A-Highway program. Interchanges may be included in the area adopted upon approval by appropriate District Maintenance Manager (DMM) or designee.
2. Since it is not the responsibility of the Department to pick up litter along curbed highway sections within municipalities, these areas are not eligible for Adopt-A-Highway sponsorship. However, certain cities have Adopt-A-Street programs available, and those municipal extensions may be eligible for this type of city program. If signing is required on those municipal extensions to inform the motorists of a city program, the DMM or designee should review and approve the signing.
3. Adoption of at least two miles is suggested for litter pickup. Smaller sections may be permissible on stub routes or areas of unusual highway configurations. Litter pick up must normally include both sides of the highway on primary two lanes. Interstates should generally be one direction, one side of the highway.
4. A sponsor may adopt only one entryway into a city. Most interest is with entryway into cities and it is best if Adopt-A-Highway sections are planned in two-mile sections that connect to the adjacent sponsorship. On two lane primary highways, the DMM or designee should plan ahead and locate the center of the city to maximize the number of two-mile entryway sponsorships. A highway junction of two primary highways maximizes the number of sponsorships even though it may not be the geographic center of the city.

C. Adoption Requests.

1. The applicant's representative (person signing the application form) shall be a minimum of 21 years of age.
2. An initial sponsorship must be for a minimum of two years.
3. In a case of multiple simultaneous requests for the same area, first preference for adoptions should be given to adjacent property owners. Second preference should be given to governing bodies of small communities and urban areas. Final preference will then be given to organizations, clubs and individuals. Multiple requests from similar organizations or individuals will be handled on a first come - first served basis.
4. An existing sponsor wishing to be authorized additional activities beyond those for which they originally applied, may request the additional activities in a letter to the DMM or designee. These requests shall be reviewed and approved in the same manner as an Adopt-A-Highway application form. The sponsor shall be notified by letter regarding the action of the DMM or designee.

5. The DMM or designee should encourage sponsors to adopt sections for activities other than litter pick up as defined below in the section IV.D. Activities other than those listed are eligible dependent upon approval by the Department. If an Adopt-A-Highway sponsorship already exists for litter pickup, other activities in the same area may be granted, but they will not be signed. Signing should be placed for the original sponsor for any highway section. Any subsequent activity shall not infringe upon the first sponsor's activities.
- D. Sponsor's responsibilities:
The sponsor shall agree to:
1. Safety Considerations
 - a. Be aware of problems that can be involved along highways and instruct their personnel in safety precautions. Where possible, access to highway right-of-way will be gained from off the right-of-way, rather than from the roadway surface or shoulders. The Adopt-A-Highway application must be approved and a "Roadworker Ahead" sign placed prior to any activities being performed.
 - b. Conduct safety meetings. Participants should attend a safety meeting conducted by the sponsor prior to participating in any roadside activity.
 - c. Perform work activities between the hours of one hour after sunrise to one hour before sunset.
 - d. Not park on the shoulders while doing litter pick up whenever possible.
 - e. Ensure that each participant wears an orange safety vest when in the right-of-way.
 - f. Ensure that participants 14 years of age or younger are furnished adequate supervision by one or more adults.
 2. Work Performance
 - a. Notify the Highway Maintenance Supervisor (HMS) or designee at least two working days in advance of the activity and obtain the required supplies and materials from the Department during regular business hours.
 - b. Perform work as outlined in the agreement.
 - c. Perform work as outlined in the area protected by the "Roadworker Ahead" sign. Unfold traffic control signs installed on the Adopt-A-Highway sign supports when the sponsor is on the roadside and close them after the work has been completed. If the sponsor does not choose to have Adopt-A-Highway signage, the sponsor must obtain "Roadworker Ahead" signs from the local maintenance garage and place them at both ends of the sponsorship area whenever Adopt-A-Highway activities are performed. Loaned "Roadworker Ahead" signs must be returned

to the maintenance garage from which they were obtained within two working days.

- d. Pick up litter a minimum of twice per year or as necessary depending on the area and conditions to keep the area clean. The sponsor must be willing to separate the litter according to the requirements of the landfill used by the local maintenance garage. Sponsors may remove any recyclables and take them to a recycler of their choice.
 - e. Do not pick up litter in the medians, from pavement surfaces or within 10 feet of the edge of the pavement. These areas will be cleaned by the Department.
 - f. Notify the Department of any large, heavy or hazardous items found on the roadside for removal by the Department.
 - g. Place filled trash bags adjacent to the Adopt-A-Highway sign for pick up and disposal by the Department.
 - h. Return unused materials and supplies furnished by the Department within one week following work performance.
3. Special Activities
- a. Provide the DMM or designee with a sketch of planting locations showing distances from the highway and listing species to be used. Plant species used in landscape installations must be approved by the Department.
 - b. Control noxious weeds as necessary using Department approved methods before the weeds produce seed in areas sponsored for landscape installation or maintenance, or harvest areas.
 - c. Use all seed harvested for the reseeding of public lands. Seed harvested in the right-of-way may not be used on privately owned land or sold. Provide public property locations and size of area to be replanted with seed harvested from the right-of-way.
 - d. Provide all plants, seed, fertilizer, etc. needed to perform the special project(s).

E. Adopt-A-Highway sign:

- 1. The Adopt-A-Highway sign is designed for one post and consists of:
 - a. The main Adopt-A-Highway sign panel (36" x 24")
 - b. The sponsor name panel (18" x 24" = 3 lines)
 - c. maximum of 10 characters per line (including spaces, hyphens, etc)
 - d. The roadworker ahead sign panel (24" x 24")
- 2. Signing is not a requirement for Adopt-A-Highway sponsorships. Sponsors may elect to adopt a highway section without signing. The sponsor should be asked specifically if they do or do not want Adopt-A-Highway signage. These sponsors will need to be provided with "Roadworker Ahead" signs for placement during work activities as covered above in Section IV.D.2.c. The sponsor will pick up these signs from a designated maintenance garage.

3. In areas of intensive signing or severe terrain, Adopt-A-Highway signing may not be possible.
4. Where possible, the Adopt-A-Highway sign is to be placed 30 feet from the edge of pavement. The sign elevation at the bottom of the sponsor name panel should be a minimum of 5 feet above the pavement edge.
5. The sign may be moved longitudinally to protect it (e.g. behind guardrail) or to conserve post length. It may be necessary to move the sign several hundred feet.
6. No more than two Adopt-A-Highway signs shall be placed for each sponsorship area (one in each direction).
7. The main panel of the original larger signs (84" x 54" and 54" x 24") should remain in place for the life of the sign (5 - 10 years). The intent is to gradually phase out the larger signs without replacing them before the end of their useful life.
8. If the sponsor declines to renew their sponsorship but another sponsor wishes to adopt the section where the original large panel signs were placed, the DMM or designee should request a new sponsor name panel to fit the existing panel. The signing request submitted to the Office of Maintenance should be specific as to the size of sponsorship panel.
9. The sponsor name on the Adopt-A-Highway sign should be the name of the actual sponsor, and not of a supporting group. Only information should be placed on the sign to properly identify the sponsor. Additional information is not necessary and should not be included. The intent of sponsorship signing is not to provide advertising. If in doubt about the proper sponsorship name panel composition, contact the Office of Maintenance or DMM.

For example:

- a. Unacceptable Acceptable

Federal Family Insurance
John Smith - Agent.

John Smith

Federal Family Insurance is extra unnecessary information.

- b. Unacceptable Acceptable
Ames Federal Family Insurance Agency. Ames Fed
Family Ins
Agency

The sponsor name needs to stay within the 10 spaces per line on the sponsorship panel.

c. Unacceptable

John Smith, Manager
Acme Motor Company.

The sign should read "John Smith" as the sponsor. Acme Motor Company is not the sponsor. If the Acme Motor Company is really the sponsor and not John Smith, then the sponsorship panel should state: "ACME Motor Company" not "John Smith".

Acceptable

John Smith

10. Requests having multiple sponsors may have more than one sponsor identified on the sign if the sponsors involved are doing the actual work and are not a supporting organization and if adequate space exists on the sponsorship name panel.

V. Procedures:

- A. A representative of an interested group or an individual should contact the local DMM or designee.
- B. The DMM or designee shall explain the program and the sponsorship application form 810105, "Application to Adopt-A-Highway".
- C. The sponsor should choose a location and complete the sponsorship application. If the requested segment of highway is already adopted, the DMM or designee shall place them on a waiting list for future notification when an opening occurs.
- D. The sponsor shall obtain the approval of a municipality and the signature of its designated representative if the section to be adopted is within the corporate limits of a municipality.
- E. The sponsor shall submit the completed application to the DMM or designee.
- F. The DMM or designee shall review the application for inclusion of all required information and the sponsor's signature. The signature of the sponsor's designated representative is required as the application form will be a legal document.
- G. The DMM or designee shall submit the application to the Office of Maintenance.
- H. The Office of Maintenance or DMM shall review permits and/or any waivers from the general program guidelines and process sign requests.
- I. The local maintenance garage shall place sign/signs identifying the sponsoring group in the appropriate area. All work associated with Adopt-A-Highway activities is to be charged to Function 648.
- J. The sponsor may obtain trash bags and safety vests from the local maintenance garage and shall conduct a safety meeting prior to any work on the right-of-way.

- K. The Department will provide safety literature to the sponsor. "Roadworker Ahead" signs are to be provided to those sponsorships where signing is not requested or possible.
- L. The DMM or designee shall instruct the sponsor to separate or process the trash according to local landfill specifications.
- M. The sponsor will collect litter in the furnished trash bags and place them adjacent to the Adopt-A-Highway sign.
- N. The Department will pick up and dispose of the full trash bags. Trash bag removal should be performed in combination with other work in the area to allow for efficiency of operations. However, trash bags should not remain on the right-of-way longer than two working days.
- O. The Department will remove large, heavy or hazardous items when found on an adopted roadside.
- P. The DMM or designee shall make a personal or telephone contact with sponsors who are not picking up the litter as per the Adopt-A-Highway agreement. If positive results are not obtained from the personal or telephone contact, a letter shall be sent to the sponsor clarifying their responsibility and commitment to the sponsorship area. The letter shall inform the sponsor that their permit may be revoked and their sponsorship signs removed if the agreement is not satisfactorily executed.
- Q. The Department may terminate an Adopt-A-Highway agreement and remove the sponsorship signs, if in the sole judgment of the Department, it is found that the sponsor is not meeting the terms and conditions of the agreement.
- R. The DMM or designee shall send the sponsor a certificate of appreciation at the end of the satisfactorily completed sponsorship period.

VI. Interstate Adoption

- A. Locations for interstate adoption is determined by the local field personnel in a given area. They should analyze the area and determine which sections are suitable for adoption. Some of the factors which can be used to make the determination are:
 - 1. Extremely heavily traveled or complicated traffic patterns.
 - a. Is the Adopt-A-Highway group or the traveling public being exposed to potential danger?
 - 2. Security and Safety
 - a. Assessment of Adopt-A-Highway safety procedures by local field personnel suggests litter pickup can be accomplished in a safe manner.
 - 3. Future programmed projects:
 - a. Assessment of future maintenance or construction projects which may affect the sponsor from fulfilling the contract. For example, if a highway is going to be under construction for the next two years, it may be better to delay starting a new sponsorship until the highway construction is completed.

4. Access to sponsorship area
 - a. Sponsors may not park along traveled roadway and will need to park either on a side/county road in rural areas or a street in urban areas. In some areas, it maybe possible to allow access to the work area by opening the right of way fence. Local field personnel will work with the sponsors to determine the safest method of entering the right of way to accomplish the pickup and where to place the bags of litter.
5. Amount of litter
 - a. Frequency of complaints received from the traveling public regarding litter along roadways is taken into consideration. These areas may be candidates to be adopted first or candidates for one-day pickup.
6. Sponsorship Length
 - a. Adopt-A-Highway sponsorships should be a minimum of 1/2 mile but probably not more than 2 miles. The sponsorship area should generally begin or end at an interchange. The sponsorship area should be one direction only unless determined by the Department that the sponsorship may be lengthened.
7. Terrain
 - a. Steep, uneven terrain that is difficult to walk on and/or not easily accessed may indicate the location is not a good candidate for interstate adoption.
8. Traffic control requirements for chosen location
 - a. The Department shall work with the sponsor to determine what types of special signing or traffic control will be required.
9. Minimum age of 14 years for participants
 - a. Adult supervision will be required for minors participating in an Interstate Adopt-A-Highway litter pickup.

VII. Special one day Interstate/Freeway cleanup

- A. For those areas that are not available for adoption, it may be appropriate to consider these areas for special one day pickup. Local field personnel may determine:
 1. Areas which will be cleaned
 - a. length of area
 - b. access to area
 - c. safety of participants
 2. Duration of pickup
 - a. two to four hours
 - b. traffic at off peak hours
 3. Number of groups participating
 4. Day of week to conduct cleanup